

CHAPTER 1

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE¹

I. Introduction

Annual Conference is the highest and final legislative authority of the Church of the Brethren in all matters of procedure, program, polity, and discipline. The authority of Conference has its source in the delegates elected by local churches and districts who come together as a deliberative body under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.²

The Conference is the final source of appeal in adjusting difficulties and solving problems that arise in the church. It serves as one of the major channels of information and interpretation of the mission and work of the church. It provides an opportunity for face-to-face confrontation and discussion of major issues that are of vital concern to the church. It serves as a means of building unity, fellowship, and understanding among the Brethren, as laity and clergy, people of all ages, and urban and rural people seek to discover the mission of the church in today's world.³

The actions of Conference are directives for the whole life of the church, and implementation is assumed to take place within a reasonable span of time. This implementation does not depend on acts of enforcement by decree. Rather, education, consultation, and patience are characteristics of Brethren polity. Groups and individuals have channels of review when decisions of Annual Conference are questioned. It is important that there be mutual trust and shared responsibility between local, district, and denominational structures of church order.⁴

The voting body consists of two sets of delegates: those representing congregations and those from the districts who also serve as the Standing Committee. All members of the Church of the Brethren who are present have full liberty to participate in the discussions, but only delegates vote.⁵

II. Frequency, Timing, Location

- A. The Annual Conference is held each year in order to deal aggressively with the issues confronting us in the church and the world.⁶
- B. The Annual Conference is to be scheduled usually sometime during the latter part of June to the early part of July, pending favorable conditions of location and cost.⁷

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- C. Since Annual Conference involves all districts and churches, it is held as close to the population concentrations of Brethren as available facilities, volunteers, and potential attendees permit, rotating every 12 years to the following geographic areas. Conference will be held in the East and Midwest four times respectively in a 12-year period. The other years of the 12-year cycle, Conference would be held in the Southeast once, the Northwest once, the Plains once, and the Southwest once, in years three, six, nine and twelve, respectively. The rotation would thus be:

Year 1	East
Year 2	Midwest
Year 3	Southeast
Year 4	East
Year 5	Midwest
Year 6	Northwest
Year 7	East
Year 8	Midwest
Year 9	Plains
Year 10	East
Year 11	Midwest
Year 12	Southwest ⁸

III. Conference Structures and Relationships

A. DELEGATE BODY

The delegate body assembled in Conference is the ultimate legislative authority of the Church of the Brethren. It is composed of the Standing Committee and local church delegates. It functions primarily as a deliberating legislative assembly, determining the polity and setting forth the primary courses of action and relationships in which the church should be involved. All official agencies of the church should assist the delegate body in the performance of that which it regards as the business of the church.⁹

1. Purposes and Functions¹⁰

- a. It is the final authority of the Church of the Brethren in all matters of procedure, program, polity, and discipline.
- b. It elects the officers of the Annual Conference, the members of the Mission and Ministry Board, one third of the members of each of the other three Annual Conference agencies, and the members of special committees authorized by the church. These elections are made from nominations presented to the delegate body by the Standing Committee.

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- c. It reviews the work of the denomination as presented to Annual Conference in the reports of the Church of the Brethren and other institutions of the denomination.
- d. It acts as the members of the legal corporation, The Church of the Brethren Incorporated, operating as the Church of the Brethren.
- e. It projects the program of the church, determining the new fields of endeavor, plans for advance, size of budget, and all other necessary matters.
- f. It disposes of queries.
- g. It receives the reports of committees appointed to deal with specific problems in the life of the church.
- h. It determines what resolutions shall be the voice of the Church of the Brethren on the problems of the day.

2. The Standing Committee¹¹

The Standing Committee is composed of the district representatives to the Conference and the immediate past moderator of the Conference.¹²

a. *Responsibilities*

The Standing Committee has nominating, legislative, judicial, and envisioning responsibilities.

- 1) *Nominating functions.* Standing Committee serves as the nominating committee for the Annual Conference. Each congregation is encouraged to send suggested names to the nominating committee of Standing Committee. For this purpose the personnel of the nominating committee and the list of vacancies should be publicized immediately following Conference. The nominating committee of Standing Committee shall prepare a ballot early in the year. Standing Committee will submit the first ballot of four names to members of the previous year's Standing Committee members in February. Standing Committee members will vote on the preliminary ballot, reducing the number of nominees to two for each office. This ballot will be shared with the membership of the denomination no later than April. A printed biographical ballot for

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Annual Conference shall be available for the first business session.

- 2) *Legislative functions.* The Standing Committee studies all queries and items of new business and recommends answers to the delegate body.
- 3) *Judicial functions.* The Standing Committee is the judicial body of the Church of the Brethren for decisions on discipline and controversy involving members, congregations, districts, and denomination.
- 4) *Envisioning functions.* The Standing Committee is to involve itself in envisioning the church God is calling forth. During its meeting the Standing Committee is to gather information from its members who listen to individuals, congregations, and districts, concerning new ideas, dreams, and visions for ministry. The Standing Committee is to share the new ideas, dreams, and visions for ministry with the appropriate Conference agencies.¹³

b. *Membership*

The membership of Standing Committee shall be composed of one representative for each district with five thousand or fewer members, and one additional representative for each additional five thousand members or fraction thereof in larger districts.¹⁴

Members of Standing Committee shall be elected by their respective districts to serve a term of three years.¹⁵ They are eligible for re-election to one additional term of three years following a full or partial term of service on Standing Committee. After such service, former members will be ineligible to serve for a period of four years. Upon transfer to another district, Standing Committee members who have not served a term for three Conferences will be replaced by the district they were originally chosen to represent. To them as well as their successors the ineligibility rule will apply.

In the Standing Committee as a whole, and in the districts that send more than one Standing Committee delegate, the principle of staggering of terms shall be applied; the exact method of initiating and regulating this procedure shall be left to the Conference secretary.

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When an alternate Standing Committee delegate takes the place of a regular delegate, the alternate shall continue to serve the remainder of the term in order to provide continuity.¹⁶

Members also serve as a resource for interpreting Annual Conference concerns and actions in their districts.¹⁷ It is recommended that Standing Committee members be ex-officio members of their respective district board.

c. *Eligibility*

Any member of the Church of the Brethren may serve the district on Standing Committee if that member has been in the district for at least one year, fulfills the qualifications as set forth by Annual Conference, and is not a member of the board of an Annual Conference agency or its program staff or an executive/minister or associate executive/minister of a the district.¹⁸

In choosing Standing Committee delegates, districts should give consideration to members of the district board and other people who are actively involved in the district program –including both ministers and lay people.

d. *Qualifications*¹⁹

- 1) Consecrated Christian living in home, church, and community.
- 2) Faithful service in local church and district.
- 3) Loyalty to the ideals and the program of the Church of the Brethren.
- 4) A working knowledge and understanding of the Church of the Brethren and its program of ministries.
- 5) Ability to exercise mature judgment in the solution of denominational problems.

e. *Authorization*

A Standing Committee authorization card, signed by the proper district officers, shall be returned to the Annual Conference Office.

f. *Open and closed sessions*

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Sessions of Standing Committee shall be open except when dealing with personnel and judicial matters and those issues on which Standing Committee would vote to have a closed session.²⁰

3. Delegates from the Local Church²¹

a. *Choice of delegates*

- 1) Congregations are urged to send their full quota of delegates, carefully selected at least six months in advance of Annual Conference, with notification of their selection sent to the Annual Conference Office.
- 2) Congregations should seek ways to involve more lay people as delegates. To this end, it is suggested that when local churches send two or more delegates, at least one of them should be from the laity. It is further urged that delegates be chosen on the basis of their qualifications rather than to effect a financial saving for the local church.
- 3) Congregations should always plan to send their pastors, although not necessarily as delegates.
- 4) Each congregation having a membership of two hundred or fewer may send one delegate; each congregation having more than two hundred members may send one additional delegate for each two hundred or fraction thereof.
- 5) People received into associate membership are not eligible for election as delegates to Annual Conference.²²

b. *Term of service*

Delegates are elected to represent congregations at Annual Conference. It is recommended that congregations consider establishing two-year terms for the congregational delegates.²³

Local Annual Conference delegates should serve as ex officio members of the church board (or leadership team) from the time of their election through Annual Conference and six months following in order to help interpret and implement official statements.²⁴

c. *Eligibility*

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Any member of the Church of the Brethren who fulfills the qualifications as interpreted by Annual Conference is eligible to serve. A non-Brethren minister, serving as pastor of a Brethren congregation, may serve as a delegate if properly elected by the congregation.²⁵

d. *Qualifications*

Local church moderators are personally responsible for seeing that the following qualifications are given careful consideration in the selection of delegates:

- 1) Consecrated Christian living in home, church, and community.
- 2) Faithful service in local church and district.
- 3) Loyalty to the ideals and the program of the Church of the Brethren.
- 4) A working knowledge and understanding of the total church program.
- 5) Ability to exercise mature judgment in the solution of Church of the Brethren problems.
- 6) Reading of church literature.
- 7) Knowledge of past decisions of the church gained by reading of minutes and reports and a continual study of current business.
- 8) Attendance at denominational and interdenominational conferences outside the local church.²⁶

e. *Credentials*

- 1) Authorization cards for delegates from congregations shall be sent, along with other literature, from the Annual Conference Office, to each pastor of each church in order that delegates may be reregistered.
- 2) Proper identification and seating of delegates shall be arranged by such provisions as special badges, a consecration ceremony, and special seating areas.

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f. *Preparation of delegates*²⁷

1) In the local church

- a) Delegates, upon election, should be consecrated for their important tasks by a spiritual commissioning service in the local church.
- b) They shall be preregistered with the Conference Director, Annual Conference Office, and a registration fee shall be paid to cover the providing of a Conference Booklet and other Conference expenses. The Conference Booklet is mailed to each preregistered delegate for use in preparing for Conference.

2) At Annual Conference

- a) Delegates shall be present by the beginning of Annual Conference to confirm their registration and be ready to go into session. It is extremely important that they attend all business sessions and participate fully in the deliberations.²⁸
- b) Consecration. An act of consecration of all delegates is held at the beginning of the first business session.

B. OFFICERS OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE²⁹

The officers of Conference include the moderator, the moderator-elect, and the secretary. The officers of Conference have the authority to act for the church in signing documents that are approved by the Conference. In cases of emergency at any time between Conferences, the officers may call together any representative group in the church to deal with the emergency.

The officers of Conference shall list queries for consideration by Conference that in their judgment have fulfilled the preliminary steps.

They shall have the responsibility of informing the congregations and delegates prior to Conference of the items of business that will come before the Conference.

They shall study the Conference business and allocate the amount of time for each item.

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They shall set the order of the day for business sessions, but these may be adjusted by action of the delegate body if need arises.

The officers of Conference shall appoint messengers, tellers, the timekeeper, and other people as needed for implementing the Conference business. No ratification of these appointments is needed.

The officers shall appoint such committees as are not provided for otherwise.

Specific position descriptions for each of the officers of Annual Conference have been prepared by the Program and Arrangements Committee and may be obtained from the Conference Director's office. They include detailed responsibilities in addition to the general duties outlined below.

1. The Moderator³⁰

a. *Term of service*

For three years, the moderator serves one year in three successive offices.

- 1) *Moderator-elect*. The moderator is elected one year in advance of beginning a year of service as moderator. During this time the elected member is known as moderator-elect.
 - 2) *Moderator*. The moderator-elect becomes moderator at the close of the Conference a year following election and continues in that office until the following Conference.
 - 3) *Past-moderator*. The moderator becomes the past moderator after serving one year as moderator concluding with the Conference. The past moderator serves as a voting member of Standing Committee for one year,³¹ and thus should not serve as a member of any of the Conference agency boards.³²
- b. *Eligibility*.** Any active member of the Church of the Brethren may serve as Moderator. During the three years of service, a moderator cannot be employed by or serve on the board of directors of Church of the Brethren, Inc., or of any agency reportable to Annual Conference, or be a member of an Annual Conference-elected committee.

c. *Duties*³³

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- 1) To preside over all sessions of Standing Committee and of Annual Conference, and to act as the official representative of the church. The moderator may appoint a parliamentarian.
- 2) To contact district and other Brethren conferences.
- 3) To serve ex-officio as a member of the Mission and Ministry Board in a consultative, nonvoting capacity.
- 4) To represent the church at strategic interchurch conferences.
- 5) To serve as the chairperson of the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee.
- 6) To serve as a member of the Leadership Team.
- 7) To give a “state of the church” address at Annual Conference.

2. The Moderator-elect³⁴

a. *Term of service*

Each Annual Conference elects a moderator-elect to serve a one-year term beginning at the close of the Conference by which that person is elected and to assume the moderatorship during the following year. The moderator-elect is a member of the Leadership Team and a non-voting member of the Mission and Ministry Board.

b. *Eligibility*

Any active member of the Church of the Brethren may be called as Moderator-elect. During the three years of service, a moderator-elect or moderator cannot be employed by or serve on the board of directors of Church of the Brethren, Inc., or of any agency reportable to Annual Conference, or be a member of an Annual Conference-elected committee.

3. The Secretary³⁵

a. *Qualifications and tenure*

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Any member of the Church who has the qualifications required for the duties of secretary is eligible for election to this office. The secretary is elected for a term of five years and is subject to tenure of two terms.

b. *Duties*

The secretary shall:

- 1) Record the minutes of Standing Committee and of Annual Conference;
- 2) Publish the Annual Conference minutes;
- 3) Interpret the actions of the Annual Conference on problems of the church;
- 4) Serve as a member of the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee and the Leadership Team;
- 5) Serve as secretary for the Church of the Brethren Inc. and record the minutes of the corporation;
- 6) Serve as ex-officio member of the Mission and Ministry Board; and
- 7) Serve as counsel to the Standing Committee Nominating Committee.

c. *Secretary's assistant*

The Conference officers shall appoint in advance of each Annual Conference an assistant to the Conference secretary.³⁶

C. THE LEADERSHIP TEAM³⁷

The Leadership Team serves as the executive committee of Annual Conference and acts as a liaison between Annual Conference and Church of the Brethren Inc. It also provides executive leadership for the Corporation and general oversight of Annual Conference. Specific functions of the Leadership Team shall include:

- Coordinate denominational envisioning;
- Delegate tasks from the actions of Annual Conference;
- Interpret Annual Conference decisions and denominational polity;
- Review recommended changes to Annual Conference policies and guidelines;
- Carry fiscal responsibility for Annual Conference, in consultation with the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee and the Corporation treasurer;
- Serve as executive committee for Annual Conference, and

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- Propose and review by-law changes for the Corporation to Standing Committee, in consultation with the Board of Directors.

1. Membership

The Leadership Team shall include...

- a. the current Annual Conference moderator;
- b. the moderator-elect;
- c. the Annual Conference secretary
- d. the General Secretary of Church of the Brethren Inc.

2. Duties

- a. *The interpretation, revision, and publication of denominational polity.*

This assignment includes the maintenance and publication of the denomination's polity manual as well as responding to questions seeking interpretation of the church's polity.

- b. *Oversight of Annual Conference directives to assure that they are lodged with the appropriate agency and that Annual Conference directives are met.*

After each Conference, the Leadership Team is to review Conference's actions, assign them to the appropriate agency (or agencies) and establish a means of seeing that the assignment is completed. If appropriate, a report of the assignment will then be made to Standing Committee and/or Conference.

- c. *Resolve differences between agencies as to jurisdiction, fundraising or other matters.*

The Leadership Team is empowered to act as coordinator or mediator in matters where there is a lack of clarity or authority affecting the Conference agencies. The Leadership Team shall have the privilege of calling for the help of persons skilled in mediation and conflict resolution if it so desires.

- d. *Serve as executive committee for Annual Conference.*

The Leadership Team is authorized to resolve disputes or answer questions when neither the Annual Conference nor the Standing Committee is in session.

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- e. *Assume supervisory responsibility for the planning and arrangements for Annual Conference.*

While the Program and Arrangements Committee and the Annual Conference executive director have hands-on responsibility for planning the Conference program and making arrangements for each event, the Leadership Team is the final authority for making policy decisions. The Program and Arrangements Committee is reportable to the Leadership Team.

3. Meetings

The Leadership Team shall meet as often as needed to handle its agenda.

D. THE PROGRAM AND ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE³⁸

The Program and Arrangements Committee is responsible for arrangements, location, and operation of the Annual Conference. The committee has the responsibility to plan the Conference program, taking account of the work of the church both at home and abroad as administered by the agencies of Annual Conference.

1. Membership

The Program and Arrangements Committee shall include . . .

- a. the Annual Conference moderator, the moderator-elect, the secretary, and the treasurer.
 - 1) The treasurer of the Church of the Brethren, Inc. is designated as the Annual Conference treasurer. In this capacity the treasurer also serves as a voting member of the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee.
- b. three members-at-large, elected by Conference for staggered terms of three years each. They are not eligible to succeed themselves.
- c. the Conference Director provides staff for the Program and Arrangements Committee as an ex-officio member.

2. Duties

- a. Plan the program and arrangements for Annual Conference.

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- b. Administer the policies guiding Annual Conference on-site activities and make recommendations to the Leadership Team regarding any desired changes in the policies.
- c. Prepare an annual budget for Annual Conference, including recommended delegate and exhibit fees and district assessments, and submit the budget to the Leadership Team for approval.
- d. Secure the locations and set dates for future Annual Conferences.

3. Meetings

In order to carry out its functions, the Program and Arrangements Committee holds regularly scheduled meetings each year.

4. Expenses

Expenses incurred in carrying out the functions of the Program and Arrangements Committee are underwritten by the Annual Conference Fund.

E. MINISTRY COMPONENTS OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

1. Statement of Relationships

Annual Conference, composed of delegates from every congregation and district, is the highest and final legislative authority of the Church of the Brethren. As such, it speaks and acts for every phase of the denomination's life and ministry. Annual Conference is the basic decision-making body for all polity undergirding the mission and structure of the church. It constitutes the members of the Church of the Brethren Inc. which is the primary unit of the denomination for national and global ministries. Annual Conference also embraces the ministries of other agencies of the church that carry out specialized ministries on behalf of the Church of the Brethren. These agencies are recognized by Annual Conference as complementary components of the denomination's ministry, and thus related to Annual Conference, while maintaining their individual incorporations. Thus, the ministry components of Annual Conference are:

1. The Church of the Brethren, Inc.³⁹

Created by Annual Conference and responsible to it, the Church of the Brethren, Inc., also known as the Corporation, is the principal administrative body for program development and implementation for the global mission of the denomination. In keeping with the general

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policies determined by Annual Conference, the Church of the Brethren, Inc., through its board of directors, also known as the Mission and Ministry Board, administers and evaluates all phases of the denominational program, except for programs specifically within the designated purview of other Annual Conference agencies. As an administrative arm of Annual Conference, it carries out, correlates, and unifies the work assigned to it, and reports its stewardship to Annual Conference. In keeping with the Corporation's responsibility, the general secretary is recognized as the principal staff executive reporting to Annual Conference. The relationship of the Corporation to Annual Conference will be strengthened as regular consultation and open communication takes place.

The sessions of Conference should always provide ample time for the Corporation to report to the church on the work we are doing cooperatively in America and overseas, and to share experiences and observations concerning the witness and mission of the church in these times.

The Church of the Brethren, Inc., is organized under the General Not-for-Profit Corporation Act of the State of Illinois, organized September 2, 2008. The members of the corporation are the congregations of the Church of the Brethren, and are represented at the annual meeting by their delegates to the Annual Conference.

2. Bethany Theological Seminary⁴⁰

Bethany Theological Seminary is the graduate school of theology for the Church of the Brethren. Nine of its twenty trustees are elected by Annual Conference from a ballot submitted by Standing Committee. One trustee is nominated by the Alumni Association and confirmed by Annual Conference. Ten trustees are elected by the seminary's board of trustees and confirmed by the Annual Conference.

3. The Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust⁴¹

The Brethren Benefit Trust supports the financial well-being of the Church of the Brethren, providing financial programs and services that respond to the needs and interests of congregations, church members, and church agencies and employees. Four of the twelve members of the board of directors are elected by Annual Conference from a ballot submitted by Standing Committee. Three directors are elected by the Brethren Benefit Trust, subject to the approval of the Annual Conference. Five directors are elected by participants in the Pension Plan.

4. On Earth Peace⁴²

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On Earth Peace provides skills, support, and spiritual basis to individuals, congregations, and communities, helping them face violence with active nonviolence. The agency, which promotes the denominational peace heritage, offers education, organizing, advocacy, and conflict transformation opportunities and equips groups within and outside of the denomination to serve a blessed and broken world with faith-based peace and justice ministries.

Five of the fifteen members of the board are elected by Annual Conference from a ballot submitted by Standing Committee. The remaining board members are chosen by the On Earth Peace board and constituents and confirmed by Annual Conference.

F. USE OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN NAME

Only the Annual Conference, Church of the Brethren, Inc., the Brethren Benefit Trust, Brethren Foundations, Inc., Bethany Theological Seminary, On Earth Peace, Inc., a district, or a congregation duly organized by a district shall be entitled to use the name “Church of the Brethren” in its own name or to indicate in any way it is an agent of another Church of the Brethren entity without the express written authorization of the Standing Committee of Annual Conference. Unless expressly recognized as an agent of another Church of the Brethren entity, no institution or interest group should suggest in its documents, publicity, or communications that it is the agent of a Church of the Brethren organization. Consent to use the name “Church of the Brethren” will not, unless otherwise indicated in writing, indicate an intention to create an agency relationship but will merely indicate the involvement of members of the Church of the Brethren in the organization.⁴³

It is recommended that special interest groups seek recognition through the Leadership Team of Church of the Brethren, Inc. It is further recommended that special interest groups shall not raise funds in the name of the denomination unless such solicitation has been approved by a Conference agency and/or the Annual Conference.⁴⁴

G. ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS⁴⁵

1. Committee on Interchurch Relations

A Committee on Interchurch Relations shall be jointly constituted by Annual Conference and the Mission and Ministry Board. This follows a pattern similar to our existing policy of naming representatives to the National Council of Churches and to the World Council of Churches. The Committee on Interchurch Relations is to

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carry forward current conversations and such other activities with other communions as will further the purpose of mutual understanding and the exploration of the question of church union. Competences, balance of viewpoint, and continuity for effective service are important values in the makeup of the committee. Three members will be appointed by the Mission and Ministry Board. They may be Board members, staff personnel, or other individuals. Three members of the committee will be elected from the church at large by Annual Conference upon nomination of the Standing Committee. The general secretary of the Board will be an ex officio member without vote. Whenever a member of the Church of the Brethren is a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, that person becomes an ex officio member of the Committee on Interchurch Relations.⁴⁶

The tenure of the appointed and elected committee members shall be three years with the possibility of serving for a second term.

The committee is responsible both to the Annual Conference and to the Mission and Ministry Board. There will be regular reporting to Conference and to the Board regarding the ongoing activities of the committee. In case of a specific proposal for union of the Church of the Brethren with one or more Christian groups, the committee has the freedom to approach Annual Conference directly.

The committee will have the services of a staff executive who will be employed by Church of the Brethren, Inc.

The full membership of the Committee on Interchurch Relations shall be recorded in the Annual Conference minutes.

2. Role of the Mission and Ministry Board

The Mission and Ministry Board shall give careful attention to basic coordination and integration of ecumenical concerns in the normal course of the Board's work.

The Mission and Ministry Board shall assign other ecumenical concerns, especially efforts to further local cooperation, to ongoing program areas as integral aspects of these efforts, using all the reliable channels of communication and implementation such as . . .

- a. counseling with districts and congregations on their relationships to councils of churches;
- b. ecumenical education;

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- c. interchurch involvements of designated program areas on behalf of cooperative ministries;
- d. coordination by the executive director of all ecumenical staff relationships;
- e. Faith and Order studies and relationships to be related to the Committee on Interchurch Relations or the appropriate units, according to their nature.

The Mission and Ministry Board shall initiate steps to develop a budget as part of the General Ministries Fund for the program of ecumenical concerns and especially for the work of the Committee on Interchurch Relations and staff.

The general secretary of the Corporation represents the Church of the Brethren ecumenically in positions customarily served by denominational executive staff. To enable the moderator to fill his or her role, the executive director will seek opportunities in ecumenical circles for the moderator to give strategic visibility to Annual Conference as the highest authority of the Church of the Brethren. In some circumstances (i.e., the visits of heads of state, major media events, and ceremonial functions), the moderator will represent the denomination.⁴⁷

3. National and World Councils of Churches

Representation of the Church of the Brethren to the National Council of Churches in Christ/Church World Service General Assembly and World Council of Churches shall continue according to present Annual Conference policy. Current policy for representation calls for half the representatives to be appointed by Standing Committee and half by the Mission and Ministry Board.

For the National Council of Churches in Christ/Church World Service General Assembly, Standing Committee nominates half (three) of the representatives, including a representative of the conciliar movement, and the Mission and Ministry Board nominates half, including the general secretary, who, by NCCC/CWS General Assembly and Annual Conference action, serves by virtue of the office. Terms of office are for four years, and attendance at NCCC/CWS General Assembly meetings is assumed for all delegates, with expenses shared equally between the Annual Conference and the Mission and Ministry Board.

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The World Council of Churches stipulated that representatives to the 1975 Fifth Assembly should be divided between lay and ordained people. The Standing Committee nominates one person, and the general secretary serves as the Mission and Ministry Board's representative. Representatives to the World Council of Churches are to be appointed about midpoint between successive Council Assemblies, which follow a six- to seven-year Assembly schedule. Newly appointed representatives will thus have opportunity (for at least three years) to join with other delegates in preparing for the Assembly in which they serve as official delegates.⁴⁸

4. Christian Churches Together⁴⁹

The 2007 Annual Conference approved full participation of the Church of the Brethren in Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCT). The newly-formed alliance seeks to provide a new space that is inclusive of Christian families in the United States, especially those Christian communions and national Christian organizations that:

- Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures;
- Worship and serve the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and
- Seek ways to work together in order to present a more credible Christian witness in and to the world.

Participation in CCT is not intended to hinder the denomination's work with other ecumenical agencies. The National Council of Churches in Christ/CWS General Assembly has given its endorsement to CCT.

The Church of the Brethren will be represented in the meetings of CCT by the general secretary of Church of the Brethren, Inc., the moderator, and moderator-elect.

H. ASSOCIATED RELATIONSHIP WITH ANOTHER DENOMINATION⁵⁰

The Church of the Brethren may wish to extend to another autonomous national church body an invitation to establish an "associated relationship," not as a merger of the two bodies or a form of union, but as a means of developing closer fellowship and cooperation and expanding existing relationships at various levels of church life. (Such an associated relationship with the American Baptist Churches USA was approved by Annual Conference in 1972.) Following are the guiding principles on which an associated relationship may be based:

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1. It is a voluntary relationship of autonomous national denominational bodies, which acknowledges a mutual desire to be in close Christian fellowship and to witness together and cooperate in missions together wherever feasible.
2. It provides a bridge across which associated organizations can move freely in various forms of cooperation at all levels without losing identity as autonomous bodies.
3. It provides a means by which congregations of each organization may enter into fellowship and cooperative endeavor without relinquishing membership in and responsibility to their respective parent bodies.
4. It enables the program agencies of each associated organization to engage in joint projects, which may require joint funding and sharing of personnel.

There should be a periodic review of this relationship by the Committee on Interchurch Relations along with representatives of the other party in any such associated relationship.

I. REFERENDUM ON MERGER⁵¹

As the highest legislative authority in the Church of the Brethren, Annual Conference may supplement its deliberations and actions by encouraging still broader involvement of the larger church in reaching given decisions. Church merger is the kind of exceptional case where such shared responsibility is essential. Any merger proposal should be referred to district conferences for ratification within a specified time. Ratification shall require a two-thirds majority of the total accumulated votes cast at all district conferences. This procedure is fully in keeping with our form of church government. It is a legitimate extension of Annual Conference authority. It ensures district participation. At the same time, it offers additional opportunity for the local congregation to express its views.

In order to provide a uniform plan of representation at district conferences where a proposal on merger is to be voted upon, the latest Annual Conference formula for district conference delegate representation shall be required. To deal adequately with the proposal, it is suggested that special district conferences be called.

J. REVIEW AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Background

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The Review and Evaluation Committee was created by the 1971 Annual Conference as a part of the reorganization of the General Board in that same year. The function of the committee, a.k.a. the “Rev & Ev Committee,” was “to evaluate the work of the General Board in terms of its mandate from Annual Conference and to report on the evaluation both to the Board and to the next Annual Conference.” That first committee, consisting of Carl E. Myers, chairman, Walter D. Bowman, Norman L. Harsh, DeWitt L. Miller, and Earl M. Mitchell, made its report, a very thorough one, to the 1972 Conference. Adopted along with its report was a recommendation from the committee that subsequent review and evaluations be conducted every five years and that the committee be elected two years in advance of the date of reporting. That pattern continued until the 1989 Conference when the frequency of Review and Evaluation Committee reports was changed to ten year intervals. Specifically, the Rev and Ev Committee was to be elected in the fifth year of each decade to “apprise the work of the General Board” and report to Annual Conference in the seventh year of the decade.

With the approval of a new design for the General Board in 1997, Annual Conference authorized the creation of a specially scheduled Review and Evaluation Committee to be elected in the year 2000 and to present its final report to Annual Conference one year later. That interim limited report, focusing primarily on the new design, was then to be followed by a full review and evaluation in the normal 10-year cycle with election of the new Rev and Ev Committee in 2005 and the report scheduled for 2007.

After hearing reports in 1999 which revealed that the new design for the General Board had created a ripple effect raising questions about long-held understandings about polity, practices, and procedures in our denomination, Standing Committee broadened the assignment by recommending that the task of the Review and Evaluation Committee “become one of reviewing the comprehensive effect of redesign of the General Board of the Church of the Brethren.”

The 2001 Rev and Ev Committee therefore examined and responded to such questions as:

Who is the official representative in ecumenical relationships?

Who should maintain and distribute the denomination’s polity manual?

Who should provide clarification on questions of denominational polity?

How should Annual Conference agencies and the Council of District Executives relate to each other?

What should be the role and composition of the Interagency Forum?

What role should the Annual Conference Office play in the denomination’s organizational structure?

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The 2001 Review and Evaluation Committee clearly conceived its task as that of looking beyond one church agency to the interplay between five reportable/accountable church agencies and to the organization to which they are accountable: Annual Conference. It also believed that the task included the relationship between Annual Conference and its accountable agencies and the Council of District Executives. The report of the 2001 Rev and Ev Committee therefore included recommendations for several innovative procedures, including the creation of the Annual Conference Council, an executive committee for Standing Committee. The report was received by Conference delegates in its entirety.

As Annual Conference prepared to elect a regularly scheduled Review and Evaluation Committee in 2005, it assigned the committee an expanded scope, just as that given the specially scheduled Rev and Ev Committee in 2000, believing it also timely to evaluate the effect of the redesign of denominational organization with the passing of another five years of operation.

The Review and Evaluation Committee Mandate⁵²

The 2005 Conference expanded the scope of the Review and Evaluation Committee to include total denominational structure and program, including all agencies reportable to the Annual Conference. The Committee will continue to be elected every ten years, with the election occurring in the fifth year of each decade and the final report of the committee to Annual Conference in the seventh year of the decade.

The Review and Evaluation Task

1. A study of the existing organization and structure of the denomination and their effectiveness for accomplishing the goals and purpose of the church.
2. A study of thoroughness and comprehension of denominational program to include the total denominational structure and programs of Church of the Brethren, Inc., and On Earth Peace.
3. A consideration of the balance and unity of denominational witness and ministry as directed and implemented by Annual Conference agencies.
4. An evaluation of the collaboration, collegiality and cooperation between Annual Conference agencies and the goals and programming of the districts.

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5. An assessment of the interest and involvement of the general membership of the Church of the Brethren in denominational programs and missions.
6. The study of other matters of current relevance to the physical and spiritual effectiveness of the denomination.
7. The committee shall make no recommendations that violate agency bylaws.

The committee shall develop the criteria for conducting its study.

Tools, Methods, and Procedures

While the committee will determine the techniques that are most appropriate for its task, the following may be helpful:

1. Self-evaluation by individual agencies.
2. Interviews with key denominational leaders.
3. Questionnaires for Annual Conference delegates.
4. Hearings and drop-in center at Annual Conference.
5. Examination of documents related to Annual Conference component groups and accountable agencies.

Guidelines

To promote cooperation between the Review and Evaluation Committee and denominational groups and agencies, several guidelines are suggested:

1. The Leadership Team shall ensure that the committee members have an opportunity to be introduced to the leadership and staff of each of the agencies and their role interpreted.
2. Initial inquiries about the programs and activity of the Annual Conference agencies will be channeled through the respective executives of each agency.
3. Committee members are welcome and encouraged to conduct spontaneous interviews of agency employees and denominational members.
4. The committee must observe confidentiality at all times.
5. The committee will keep the Conference Director and the executives of the Annual Conference agencies apprised of its progress.

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6. The committee may make an interim report to Annual Conference after the first year of its study.

IV. Business of Conference⁵³

The usual sources of business for the Conference are the district conferences, the Standing Committee, the Leadership Team, the Mission and Ministry Board, On Earth Peace, the Brethren Benefit Trust, Bethany Theological Seminary, and other boards and committees constituted by Annual Conference.

The Annual Conference elects the officers of the Annual Conference, elects or confirms all of the members of the Mission and Ministry Board, elects one-third of the members of boards of other agencies reportable to Annual Conference, and it elects members of special committees authorized by the Conference. It appoints individuals to represent the church in meeting with other bodies, such as councils of churches.

It reviews the work of the church as presented in the reports of the Mission and Ministry Board and certain institutions and projects of the general program of the church.

It acts upon queries and receives reports of committees appointed to deal with specific problems in the life of the church.

The program of business appears in the Conference Booklet compiled by the Conference secretary, to whom all queries and reports should be sent in ample time.

Inspirational addresses, group conferences, and other features help to make these Conferences a great influence in the life of the church.

A. QUERIES⁵⁴

Any member of the church, or any congregation, has a right to raise questions and concerns that relate to the Christian life or to the mission and work of the church. Counsel and help should be sought from the pastor or the local church board, the district executive/minister, or the district board or commissions, national staff members, the Mission and Ministry Board, or any agency reportable to Annual Conference. When an adequate and satisfactory answer to an important question cannot be found in any of the above channels, then a query may be formulated to go to Conference.

1. Preparation and Processing of Queries

a. *Types of questions that may go to Conference for consideration*

Distinction should be made between different types of questions and concerns. Legislative action by the highest deliberative assembly of the church is necessary in answering some questions, but many of them can be dealt with more effectively in other ways.

- 1) Changes in church polity will always need to be made through legislative action. Questions of this nature and suggestions for change should receive extensive study by the congregations, the district, and the denominational staff before being brought before the Annual Conference.
- 2) Statements on the Christian life and witness, moral problems and positions are usually intended to influence personal and group habits of thought and action. We believe education and motivation are more effective than legislation in dealing with this type of issue. The Annual Conference agencies are constantly working in these areas and can provide literature and program resources. All information on any such questions should be carefully studied before formulating a query to Conference. Legislative action on such issues should be used with restraint.
- 3) Matters of church program and administration do not normally require legislative action. The church employs a staff to assist congregations in program and administration. Books, literature, and program materials are constantly made available to the churches for their use. Such church periodicals as *Messenger* and *Brethren Life and Thought*, and official denominational web sites provide opportunities to communicate and debate ideas concerning the church program and administration. An appeal for new legislative action should be made only when an adequate hearing or action has not been achieved through these means.

On any matter, when legislation by the Conference is felt to be necessary, a query is the means to follow. A query may originate in the local church, in the district, in a Conference agency board, or in the Standing Committee. The procedures outlined below in “Query Procedures” (section 1.b.) should be followed in the preparation and processing of a query.

b. *Query procedures*⁵⁵

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- 1) *In the local church.* When a member presents to the local church board or congregational business meeting a question or concern that merits consideration, the local church should, when it seems appropriate, appoint a working committee to do the following things:
 - a) Define and state clearly the question or concern.
 - b) Evaluate and try to answer the concern through research and inquiry.
 - c) Confer with the district secretary and the denominational staff to get information as to what has been done or is being planned in regard to this particular matter.
 - d) If it is a new concern, the district and denominational staff should be consulted regarding what immediate action might be taken, or whether Conference legislation would be helpful or necessary.
 - e) If the matter does seem to need legislative action, the congregational business meeting should prepare a query to send to the district conference.
- 2) *In the district.* Whenever possible, the district should answer the question or concern presented in the query.
 - a) The query should be reviewed by the district board; or the district can appoint a committee to investigate the merits of the query, hold hearings to evaluate different sides of the question, and seek to find a satisfactory answer.
 - b) If a satisfactory answer is not found and the district conference feels that the query merits legislative action by Annual Conference, or if the concern or question of the query relates to denominational or general church matters directly, the district may send the query on to Annual Conference.
 - c) When a district board or district conference initiates a query, steps should be taken to assure that the concerns expressed in the preceding procedures are observed.
 - d) The district secretary should send copies of the query immediately after approval to the secretary of Annual Conference and to the Annual Conference executive director, accompanied by a letter of explanation of the origin of the

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query and actions taken on the query up to that point. (The printing deadline is February 1.)

- 3) *In the denomination.* Queries that have been processed according to the above procedures shall be listed by the Conference officers for consideration by the Conference.

c. *Recommendations for preparation of queries*⁵⁶

The query should always clearly state the issue, remain open-ended for the widest possible base of judgment and response, and include some of the factual details by which to identify it. The following specific suggestions may prove to be helpful. The query should . . .

- 1) give the full name of the congregation or official body in the district initiating the query;
- 2) state as precisely as possible, *and in question form*, the issue concerning which the query is being presented;
- 3) give briefly the principal reasons or conditions that prompted the query;
- 4) avoid giving answers or proposing a solution to the problem raised by the query, leaving these rather to the outcome of the Annual Conference action. A proposal may be offered, but in the awareness that study may lead to another outcome;
- 5) give the date on which the query was initiated by the congregation or the official body of the district;
- 6) indicate the district conference (and the date and location of its meeting) through which it hopes to have the query passed to Annual Conference;
- 7) have appended the names and positions of the officers of the congregation or official body that is the source of the query;
- 8) have attached the action and the date of the district conference and the name of the district moderator and conference secretary, if the action is to pass the query to Annual Conference.

Queries coming from the Standing Committee will follow as many of the above specific suggestions as apply.

2. Selection of Committees for Study of Queries

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If the decision of Annual Conference is to adopt the query or the concern(s) of the query and to make a study, the assignment should be directed to a committee.

a. *Membership*⁵⁷

Committees chosen to make studies and propose answers to queries shall be elected from a slate presented by Standing Committee.

The slate shall include at least twice as many names as are to be elected. The slate shall also be open to further nominations from the Conference floor. No individuals shall be elected to a Conference study committee until at least one year has elapsed following the termination of any previous service on a study committee.

b. *Procedure*

Annual Conference study committees should counsel with concerned individuals, congregations, and district officers/staff and need always to be aware that a major effort toward bridging the gap in understanding can be made before final action is taken on the paper. Study committees need to make adequate research into the total scope of the problem and its varying viewpoints.

- 1) As often as is feasible and in keeping with good stewardship, study committees in the process of making policy statements are encouraged to hold hearings throughout the denomination to test opinion of statements coming to Annual Conference and to generate input and participation from congregations.
- 2) Consultation should be made with people whose work is involved or who are directly involved in some other way with the area of life that is being studied. These viewpoints should be considered in the forming of the denominational policy.
- 3) Study committees should be in dialogue with the appropriate staff of Church of the Brethren, Inc. and/or other Annual Conference agencies to gain their insights reached through their wide contacts with the denomination.
- 4) Consultation with district staffs just before and after new statements are adopted is encouraged so that where interpretation is needed it can be quickly identified.⁵⁸

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- 5) The Conference secretary shall provide the committee with a set of “Guidelines for Study Committees,” as well as a letter reviewing the task assigned the committee by Conference.

c. Recommendations and official statements

In addition to the query, other forms of new business are statements and recommendations brought to the Conference by one of the agencies responsible to the Annual Conference or by Standing Committee. These normally are the outgrowth of extensive deliberation, although this fact does not of itself preclude such further study as may be determined by the Conference before a decision is in order. These forms of new business normally carry their own proposals and are acted upon when they are presented. However, they are subject to approval on the same basis as any other matter of business before Annual Conference.⁵⁹

B. UNFUNDED ANNUAL CONFERENCE MANDATES

Whereas: Annual Conference is the highest human authority in Church of the Brethren polity, and

Whereas: there are various program and administrative arms of the Church of the Brethren, and

Whereas: program decisions made by Annual Conference should be systematically worked into the program and budget processes of the various agencies reportable to Annual Conference, and

Whereas: careful stewardship of God-given resources is an historic value of the Church of the Brethren,

Therefore,

1. As Standing Committee each year examines all new and unfinished business to be presented to Annual Conference, it shall assess each item for implications of *new* programming or other mandates entailing costs by an agency or agencies that are not included in current budgets. If Standing Committee determines there are such implications mandated by the item, it shall have the option to recommend to Annual Conference that a decision on the business item be delayed for one year in order for a study to be made of the feasibility and costs that may be required of the agency or agencies and any other collateral impacts, such as closure or substitution of other programming that may need to occur in order to implement the program.

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2. That the task of preparing this report be completed by the Program Feasibility Committee consisting of two persons who are members of Standing Committee at the time of their appointments and one person representing each of the agencies who are staff or members of their respective agency boards at the time of their appointment.

The committee shall be appointed in the following way:

- a. Standing Committee representatives will be selected by Standing Committee. Expiration of a term of service on Standing Committee will not require termination of service on the Program Feasibility Committee.
- b. Agency representatives will be appointed by their respective agencies using procedures of their own choosing.
- c. Tenure shall be for one term of four years. The committee members shall have staggered terms in order to keep continuity on the committee.

3. The Program Feasibility Committee will be chaired by the Standing Committee representative with the greater length of service on the Program Feasibility Committee.

4. This committee will conduct a thorough study including consultation with the affected agency or agencies and contact with the group that brought the query or item for further clarification and dialogue, and will bring this report directly back to Annual Conference which authorized the study.

5. When an unfunded mandate involving agency programming *arises from the floor of Annual Conference without having been processed through normal channels*, the action of Annual Conference will not be implemented until the Program Feasibility Committee has conducted a feasibility study and cost analysis of the proposed program. The Program Feasibility Committee will report the results of its study to the next Annual Conference through the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee will consider the item as *new business* and make a recommendation for action to Annual Conference including the study of the Program Feasibility Study.

6. Exception: When an immediate response is imperative, the Program Feasibility Committee, upon completion of the feasibility study and cost estimates, will report to the Annual Conference officers and the officers of the affected agency or agencies. Upon approval by these groups, the program will be implemented without additional action by Annual Conference. A report of actions taken under these circumstances will be made to the next Annual Conference by the Conference officers. In the event the officers and affected agencies cannot agree on the implementation of the program, the dispensation of the item will follow the appropriate process in # 4 or # 5 above.

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7. The expenses of the Program Feasibility Committee will be reimbursed out of the Annual Conference budget.⁶⁰

V. Conduct of Conference Business⁶¹

A. PHYSICAL FEATURES

The Program and Arrangements Committee plans for the most effective physical arrangements, including the placement of microphones, a workable system of recognizing and honoring people wishing to speak, and the training and use of ushers to preserve order and to improve business procedures.

B. VOTING

1. The moderator shall decide when a question shall be voted upon, but anyone from the voting body may move the previous question.
2. A simple majority vote shall decide all matters except where Robert's *Rules of Order* requires otherwise, or on such matters as Standing Committee interprets as involving a change of church polity, in which case a two-thirds majority is required for passage.

C. CONFERENCE RULES

1. The Standing Committee has no authority to change a query or a paper presented as Conference business.
2. The Conference shall have no authority to change the wording or the intent of any paper or query submitted as Conference business; but upon accepting it as business, Conference may alter its scope or redirect its emphasis so long as Conference deals with its original concern.⁶²
3. The Conference may not alter the regular report of one of the boards or continuing committees, but may alter the paper of any board or committee to which it has directed a matter of business for study and report. No report presented by a board or continuing committee may contain business items. If there are recommendations, questions, or a seeking of support of a proposal, etc., they must come as an item of new business and not be included in an informative report.⁶³
4. Each query with its current answer shall be presented by the chairperson of the appropriate committee or another representative.

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Queries and their answers shall not be read unless the Conference officers deem it necessary. Reports shall be presented by their respective representatives after which the moderator shall declare the same the business of the meeting.⁶⁴

5. If the final answer presented in response to a query is totally rejected by the Conference, the query shall be regarded as unanswered and shall be immediately disposed of as though it were an item of new business.⁶⁵
5. If an agenda item determined by Standing Committee to involve a change in church polity comes too late to be included in the Conference Booklet, final action on that item shall be postponed until the following Annual Conference.⁶⁶

D. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

1. No one shall speak more than twice on the same question. The first speech shall be limited to three minutes and the second to two minutes. This shall not include the explanation of a report or a paper called for by the moderator.⁶⁷
2. All appeals from the rulings of the moderator shall be decided by the voting body.
3. Robert's *Rules of Order* shall be the standard for any point not covered by these rules.
4. These rules may be amended at any regular session of Annual Conference.

E. GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL RESPONSE QUERIES⁶⁸

Standing Committee may determine that a query is likely to generate adversarial stances because of deep feelings and strong differences of opinion. It may then choose to recommend that Annual Conference depart from Robert's *Rules of Order* and follow a process that has been developed for dealing with "Special Response Queries."

VI. Financing Annual Conference⁶⁹

The means of financing Annual Conference is the responsibility of the Leadership Team. The following are the principal means for accomplishing such funding.

A. DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS

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District assessments have been a significant part of Annual Conference support since 1907. District assessments shall be “continued as needed,” according to Annual Conference minutes.⁷⁰

B. REGISTRATION FEES

Standing Committee and local church delegates shall pay a registration fee in advance of Conference. This fee is underwritten by the districts and churches sending these delegates. There is a general registration at Conference for non-delegates, and a pre-registration process as well. These fees cover such items as the Conference Booklet and other Conference expenses, the exact amount of these fees to be recommended by the Program and Arrangements Committee to the Leadership Team.

C. OFFERINGS

The Program and Arrangements Committee shall plan for offerings to be taken during Conference worship services to support the Conference expenses.⁷¹

¹ The place of Annual Conference in Church of the Brethren organization and polity has been clarified in such key situations as these: 1947 Minutes of the Annual Conferences Church of the Brethren (1945-1954), “Brotherhood Organization,” 52-59; 1960 Minutes of the Annual Conferences Church of the Brethren (1955-1964), “Study of the Annual Conference,” 162-183; 1968 Minutes of the Annual Conferences Church of the Brethren (1965-1969), “The Frequency and Organization of Annual Conference,” 316-320. Additional references and emendations follow.

² 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “The Frequency and Organization of Annual Conference,” 316; “Church Polity, Including Referendum on Merger and Continuation of Ecumenical Concerns,” 337.

³ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “The Frequency and Organization of Annual Conference,” 316.

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⁴ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “Church Polity, Including Referendum on Merger and Coordination of Ecumenical Concerns,” 337. See also 2004 Minutes (2000-2004), “Query on Congregational Disagreement with Annual Conference Decisions,” 1270-1280.

⁵ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “The Frequency and Organization of Annual Conference,” 318.

⁶ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “The Frequency and Organization of Annual Conference,” 319. See also 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), “Denominational Structure,” 276.

⁷ 2007 Minutes, “Updates to Annual Conference Polity,” 251.

⁸ 2007 Minutes, “Update to Annual Conference Polity.”

⁹ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “The Frequency and Organization of Annual Conference,” 318. See also 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), “Brotherhood Organization,” 57.

¹⁰ 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), “Brotherhood Organization,” 57.

¹¹ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “The Frequency and Organization of Annual Conference,” 318. See also 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), “Brotherhood Organization,” 57.

¹² 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), “Denominational Structure,” 274.

¹³ 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), “Denominational Structure,” 275.

¹⁴ 1988 Minutes (1985-1989), “Ratio for Standing Committee Representations,” 674.

¹⁵ 1989 Minutes (1985-1989), “Standing Committee Members – Term of Office,” 879-880.

¹⁶ This sentence has been edited to conform with the three-year term.

¹⁷ 1976 Minutes (1975-1979), “Brotherhood Understanding,” 208.

¹⁸ 1987 Minutes (1985-1989), “Dual Membership and Conflict of Interest/Time/Responsibility,” 503; 1989 Minutes (1985-1989), “Eligibility for Standing Committee,” 879.

¹⁹ 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), “Brotherhood Organization,” 55.

²⁰ 1978 Minutes (1975-1979), “Role and Function of Standing Committee,” 469.

²¹ 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), “Brotherhood Organization,” 56; 1960 Minutes (1955-1964), “Study of the Annual Conference,” 180-181.

²² 1985 Minutes (1985-1989), “Membership Study,” 132.

²³ 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), “Denominational Structure,” 275.

²⁴ 1976 Minutes (1975-1979), “Brotherhood Understanding,” 207.

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²⁵ 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), "Brotherhood Organization," 56; 1973 Minutes (1970-1974), "Non-Brethren Ministers as Delegates," 357.

²⁶ 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), "Brotherhood Organization," 56-57.

²⁷ 1960 Minutes (1955-1964), "Study of the Annual Conference," 180-181.

²⁸ This paragraph edited to conform to new Annual Conference schedule begun in 2000.

²⁹ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), "The Frequency and Organization of Annual Conference," 318-319.

³⁰ See also 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), "Brotherhood Organization," 58.

³¹ 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), "Denominational Structure," 274.

³² 1989 Minutes (1985-1989), "Eligibility for Standing Committee," 879.

³³ 2005 Minutes, "Updates to Annual Conference Polity," 251-251.

³⁴ 1962 Minutes (1955-1964), "Moderator-Elect," 254. See also 1965 Minutes (1965-1969), "Recommendations from Standing Committee," 102, and 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), "Denominational Structure," 273.

³⁵ 1965 Minutes (1965-1969), "Recommendation from Standing Committee," 102; 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), "Denominational Structure," 274.

³⁶ 1966 Minutes (1965-1969), "Proposal on Officer Personnel," 176.

³⁷ 2001 Minutes (2000-2004), "Report of the Annual Conference Review and Evaluation Committee," 497-500.

³⁸ 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), "Denominational Structure," 275-276. See also 1960 Minutes (1955-1964), "Election and Term of Service of Standing Committee," 175-176.

³⁹ 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), "Denominational Structure," 273. Updated 2005 Minutes, 241-250).

⁴⁰ 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), "Brotherhood Organization," 79; 1972 Minutes (1970-1974), "Bethany Seminary Study Committee," 235; 1974 Minutes (1970-1974), "A Plan to Establish a Bethany Seminary Fund . . .," 443; 1977 Minutes (1975-1979), "Revision of the Member-at-large Category of the Bethany Board of Directors," 356. See also 1925 Minutes (1920-1930), "Commission on Educational Problems," 5-6.

⁴¹ 1943 Minutes (1941-1950), "Retirement Plan for Ministers and Missionaries," 4-10; 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), "Reorganization of the General Brotherhood Board," 343; 1982 Minutes (1980-1984), "Church of the Brethren Pension Plan Restated," 424-434; 1986 Minutes (1985-1989), "General Board/Pension Board Relationship," 319-320; 1987 Minutes (1985-1989), "Pension Board Restructure Committee Report," 476-478; 1989 Minutes (1985-1989), "Brethren

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Benefit Trust Document Revisions,” 906-907; 1990 Minutes (1990-1994), “Ratification of Brethren Benefit Trust Actions,” 131-133; 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), “Ratification of Brethren Benefit Trust Actions,” 342; 1993 Minutes (1990-1994), “Proposed Change to Brethren Benefit Trust Articles of Organization,” 630; 1998 Minutes (1995-1999), “Changes to the Brethren Benefit Trust,” 791-794.

⁴² 1998 Minutes (1995-1999), “On Earth Peace Assembly Request for....,” 805-806. See also 1983 Minutes (1980-1984), “Request of the On Earth Peace Assembly for....” 587-590.

⁴³ 1987 Minutes (1985-1989), “Revisions of Brethren Polity,” 486.

⁴⁴ 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), “Denominational Structure,” 281.

⁴⁵ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “Church Polity,” 338-339. See also “Affiliation with the National Council of Churches,” 324.

⁴⁶ 1971 Minutes (1970-1974), “Report of the Committee on Interchurch Relations,” 116.

⁴⁷ 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), “Denominational Structure,” 274.

⁴⁸ 1976 Minutes (1975-1979), “Appointment of Representatives to the World Council of Churches,” 220-221.

⁴⁹ 2007 Minutes, “Recommendation Regarding Christian Churches Together,” 293-294.

⁵⁰ 1971 Minutes (1970-1974), “A Proposal of an Associated Relationship....,” 164-165. 1972 Minutes (1970-1974), “A Proposal of an Associated Relationship....,” 253.

⁵¹ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “Church Polity,” 337-338.

⁵² 2005 Minutes, “The Review and Evaluation Committee – A New Mandate,” 238-240.

⁵³ 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), “Brotherhood Organization,” 57.

⁵⁴ 1965 Minutes (1965-1969), “Report of the Central Committee,” 59-60; 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “The Frequency and Organization of Annual Conference,” 317-318, and “Proposal on Query Procedures,” 426-427.

⁵⁵ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “The Frequency and Organization of Annual Conference,” 317-318; “Proposal on Query Procedures,” 426-427.

⁵⁶ 1965 Minutes (1965-1969), “Report of the Central Committee,” 60.

⁵⁷ 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), “Selection of Conference Committees,” 348.

⁵⁸ 1976 Minutes (1975-1979), “Brotherhood Understanding,” 208.

⁵⁹ 1965 Minutes (1965-1969), “Report of the Central Committee,” 60.

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- ⁶⁰ 2008 Minutes (2005-2008), “Revision to Unfunded Mandates,” 1241.
- ⁶¹ 1960 Minutes (1955-1964), “Election and Term of Service of Standing Committee,” 181-182. See also 2006 Minutes, “Doing Church Business,” containing recommendations for Conference officers and planning committees to consider for modifying the conduct of business in future Conferences.
- ⁶² 1951 Minutes (1945-1954), “Amendments to the Conference Rules,” 130.
- ⁶³ 1975 Minutes (1975-1979), “Rules on Business Items in Annual Reports,” 99.
- ⁶⁴ 1965 Minutes (1965-1969), “Reading of Conference Business,” 45.
- ⁶⁵ 1967 Minutes (1965-1969), “Disposition of Unanswered Queries,” 260.
- ⁶⁶ 1982 Minutes (1980-1984), “Methods and Procedures Dealing with Issues that Come to Annual Conference,” 424.
- ⁶⁷ 1988 Minutes (1985-1989), “length of Speeches in Conference Debate,” 672.
- ⁶⁸ 1988 Minutes (1985-1989), “A Structural Framework for Dealing with Strongly Controversial Issues,” 674-681. Revised 2009, 2009 Minutes, pg. 231-240.
- ⁶⁹ 1990 Minutes (1955-1964), “Election and Term of Service of Standing Committee,” 182-183; 2001 Minutes (2000-2004), “Report of the Annual Conference Review and Evaluation Committee,” 506-507).
- ⁷⁰ 1907 Minutes, “A Report of Committee to Provide a Plan for Raising Funds for the Annual Meeting Treasury”; 1960 Minutes (1955-1964), “Study of the Annual Conference,” 172.
- ⁷¹ The 2002 InterAgency Forum agreed that 100 percent of Annual Conference offerings should be applied toward Conference expenses. The decision was reaffirmed by the 2003 InterAgency Forum for an indefinite time. (See minutes of InterAgency Forum, January 30-31, 2003, page 3.)